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Author(s): J. P. Williams

Source: *NWSA Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring, 1992), pp. 59-72

Published by: [Johns Hopkins University Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4316176>

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“A Bond Stronger Than Friendship or Love”: Female Psychological Development and *Beauty and the Beast*

J.P. Williams

Feminist critics have frequently discussed film and television's tendency to represent the female body as the site of complex ideological struggle. The notion of woman as the bearer of meaning in patriarchal discourse, for example, is at the heart of Laura Mulvey's landmark study of the male gaze in film. Mary Ann Doane, among others, has furthered this concern with her work on femininity as masquerade.¹ Such critics have provided ample evidence that representations of femininity function as means of transmitting patriarchal expectations concerning gender.

In recent years, however, feminist scholars have become interested in questions regarding the female spectator. Precisely why do women involve themselves with media that are blatantly patriarchal in nature, and exactly which women choose such media? Although it becomes increasingly clear that the answers to these questions are influenced by such factors as race, class, and sexual preference, feminist scholars are beginning to identify both analytical tools and texts which illuminate our understanding of female spectatorship.²

The television series *Beauty and the Beast* is one such text which has already gained popular and scholarly attention due to its strong appeal for a female audience.³ Despite the series' cancellation in 1990, its predominantly female fan movement continues to grow as fans hold conventions and write their own texts based on the program.

The primary attraction of *Beauty and the Beast* for its female fans is the character of Vincent (the “beast” of the title) and the nature of his relationship with the female protagonist Catherine Chandler. The series' emphasis on the intense emotional bond that Vincent and Catherine share is referred to repeatedly in the discourse by and about the program's fans.

The emphasis on the appeal of Vincent and his empathic connection to

Correspondence and requests for reprints should be sent to the author at 1 Westbrooke Townhouses, Statesboro, GA 30458.

Catherine highlights the feature of the series that makes it uniquely interesting to female fans and feminist scholars alike: its reversal of the traditional site of ideological struggle. Instead of the ordinary representation of the female body as the bearer of meaning, *Beauty and the Beast* focuses on the male body and psyche in the character of Vincent.

In order to understand the appeal of *Beauty and the Beast* for its female audience, this paper will utilize the work of Nancy Chodorow.⁴ The character of Vincent, particularly in his relationship with Catherine, can be seen to operate out of the sense of nurturance and self-in-relation which Chodorow contends is central to female psychological development. The exaggeration of both Vincent's masculine and feminine character traits presents the internalization of the maternal role as the only constraint capable of preventing masculinity from becoming a destructive, antisocial force. These feminine traits, however, are appropriated by the series in an attempt to present a benevolent patriarchy. Thus, *Beauty and the Beast* ultimately co-opts feminist concerns in service to patriarchal culture.

Limitations on the scope of Chodorow's work have been pointed out by critics who have noted her assumptions regarding sexuality, race, and class as well as the possibility that she places too great an emphasis on individuals' ability to overcome the influence of patriarchy. Chodorow's critics maintain that her analysis of female psychological development relies too heavily on a white, middle-class, heterosexual model.⁵ However, Chodorow states that what she is analyzing is the model of female psychology as it exists in contemporary patriarchal society. Although analysis based on this model undoubtedly has limitations, it is useful in understanding the culturally determined nature of women's psychological development.

Another criticism of Chodorow states that her analysis centers on problems in individuals and families but does not address the societal structure which creates the model.⁶ While this criticism also points out the limitations of Chodorow's work, I would argue that her model does provide a basis for understanding how patriarchal structure can affect the development of individual women.

Within feminist media studies, proponents of psychology-based criticism are divided with regard to the use of Chodorow's work. The opinions of those favoring the use of Chodorow are best expressed by Jackie Byars. Byars maintains that Chodorow's work, in conjunction with that of Carol Gilligan, presents a woman-centered framework for the study of female genres and spectators.⁷

Other scholars have criticized what they perceive as an over reliance on Chodorow's work by feminist media critics, maintaining that her theory allows only regressive pleasure for women.⁸ I would maintain, however, that 1) it is certainly possible that some women at some times take pleasure in these regressive fantasies; and 2) that what is under examination here is

the type of pleasure being offered to women by the mass media. In other words, while regressive fantasies may not be the only ones women find pleasurable, it is significant that the media continually conceptualize the female viewer as being particularly susceptible to regressive fantasies. As Byars states, it is partly through the use of such fantasies that the media "recuperate woman for patriarchy by giving her what Chodorow describes as desirable but highly unlikely—a nurturing male lover."⁹

Chodorow's work has been utilized by several feminist literary and media critics, including Janice Radway. In *Reading the Romance*, Radway finds a major reason for the popularity of romance novels among women in the genre's role as compensatory literature. As Radway notes, the romance's "stress on the emotional bonding between hero and heroine suggests that women still desire to be loved, cared for, and understood by an adult who is singularly capable of self-abnegating preoccupation with a loved one's needs."¹⁰ The readers, fulfilling traditional female roles, provide nurturance to their husbands and families but receive little nurturance in return. The romance novel thus compensates its audience for this lack by allowing the reader to experience the nurturing attention the heroine receives from her lover.

Beauty and the Beast serves a similar function for its female viewers. However, unlike the romance novel, *Beauty and the Beast* does not simply provide moments in which the heroine is the object of loving attention from an otherwise emotionally distant hero. Instead, the series presents a hero whose entire reason for being is his emotional attachment to the heroine and who, in addition, fulfills several traditionally feminine roles within his society. The popularity of this series among women is rooted primarily in its ability to recreate the intensity of the female preoedipal period, transferring many of the mother's characteristics onto Vincent.

Beauty and the Beast begins with an acknowledgment of the limited possibilities for self-definition and autonomy available to women in patriarchal societies. When the heroine moves from being her wealthy father's pampered daughter to functioning as an independent assistant district attorney, *Beauty and the Beast* seems to suggest that the re-establishment of an intense empathic bond similar to that of mother and child is necessary for building confidence and self-esteem. To achieve that bond, however, Catherine must be expelled from her father's world and be reborn into Vincent's domain.

The pilot episode recounts Catherine's figurative death in urban society and her rebirth in the tunnel world under Vincent's protection and care. The extended metaphor of death and rebirth in the pilot prefigures several thematic concerns in *Beauty and the Beast* that address female psychological development. In fact, one theme running throughout the narrative of *Beauty and the Beast* associates Vincent with characteristics usually associated with motherhood. Throughout the episodes, Vincent is

frequently placed in a position in which his protection of Catherine has less to do with the tradition of rescuing the damsel in distress than with providing emotional sustenance and nurturance.

In the pilot, Catherine is initially characterized by her lack of a mother and her dependence on her father. She is working in her father's law firm, dating a man her father has essentially selected for her. Her dissatisfaction with this life is expressed in terms of a minor rebellion for which she is severely punished. Instead of trying to make a favorable impression on her boyfriend's business associates, Catherine spends some time at a party consoling a friend who has just left her husband. When her boyfriend complains, Catherine leaves the party alone. With no male protection, she immediately is attacked, her face viciously slashed.

After the attack, Vincent discovers Catherine and brings her back to the tunnels. The rebirth imagery throughout the sequence that follows is striking: not only do the dark, cavernous tunnels recall images of the womb, Catherine's condition resembles that of a newborn infant in many ways. With her face and eyes bandaged, she becomes totally dependent on Vincent both physically and emotionally. She initially experiences Vincent as being completely devoted to her needs and sustenance: he feeds her, explains the new world in which she finds herself; and even undertakes her re-education by reading aloud to her from Dickens.

Much is made in the pilot and in subsequent episodes of the unusual empathic bond connecting Vincent and Catherine. This bond seems to form much of the appeal of the series among its female viewers, recalling as it does the intensity of the mother-child relationship in the preoedipal phase. In this respect Vincent fulfills a dual role for female viewers. Not only does he represent an idealized mother figure, but his status as a man performing a female role makes the process of character identification easier for female viewers.

Vincent's appearance in many ways places him in the same social situation as women: he is an outsider who is denied many of the privileges to which his masculinity would otherwise entitle him. The female viewer identifies with Vincent's situation and takes pleasure both in watching Vincent surmount the obstacles in his path and in experiencing the intense relationship he shares with Catherine.

Physically, Vincent is characterized by an androgyny which, in fact, heightens the viewer's awareness of his masculinity. His feminine characteristics include his long hair and his unusual, medieval-style clothing. His masculine characteristics include his leonine appearance, his height and his physical strength. The best indication of how these characteristics combine to stress his masculinity is Vincent's voice, which is extremely deep and soft and which can be replaced by a series of leonine growls and roars. Although characters in the series may be uncertain as to whether Vincent is human, they are never unsure about his gender.

Vincent is explicitly linked to feminine qualities at several points in the series. On more than one occasion, Catherine specifically connects Vincent's love for her to the loss of her mother. In one episode Catherine gives Vincent a porcelain rose her mother had given her and tells Vincent that after her mother died she had forgotten what it meant to be loved so completely.

The final episode of the first season deals at length with the connection between Catherine's love for Vincent and the loss of her mother. Much of the episode concerns Catherine's need to be reassured that her mother would approve of the life she is living. She fails to receive such assurance either from her father or from a male psychiatrist. From this concern with her mother, the episode proceeds to her questions about whether her relationship with Vincent should continue. All these doubts are resolved only after a discussion with a female friend who is herself a mother—a discussion that begins when the friend attempts to comfort Catherine, who has just awakened from a nightmare. In yet another parallel to the mother-child relationship (with Catherine, significantly, still playing the role of the child), Catherine's doubts and fears are resolved as she concludes that her relationship with Vincent provides the "happy life" she has been told was her mother's wish for her.

Vincent's social role, like his appearance, combines the masculine and feminine. The series divides its action between two separate societies—that of contemporary New York City and that of a secret world in the tunnels beneath New York. Vincent's role in each society is radically different. In the tunnels, he is an honored member of the society, second only to the group's leader, "Father." And here he most often is seen in the company of the society's children. He is both a teacher and a caretaker of the children, socializing them in the ways of the community.

In addition to his maternal care of the children, however, Vincent also takes a traditional masculine role as the protector of Catherine and the tunnel dwellers. In this aspect, he resembles other male heroes, rushing to Catherine's rescue whenever she encounters danger. Even these rescues, however, are based on Vincent's empathic bond with Catherine: he knows she is in danger because he can feel Catherine's fear at the very moment she feels it.

Rather than being admired by society as a whole for these exploits, Vincent is unknown to most people and misunderstood by the few who do see him. Whatever his status in the tunnels, in the larger society of New York, Vincent is cast in the feminine position of the other—an outsider because he appears different. His situation resembles that of women who find that whatever status they may have within the private world of the family, their status in society has been predetermined by virtue of their gender.

The fact that Vincent is male goes far in dispelling the negative

associations of his maternal qualities. As Chodorow states, children “expect and assume women’s unique capacities for sacrifice, caring, and mothering, and associate women with their own fears of regression and powerlessness. They fantasize more about men, and associate them with idealized virtues and growth.”¹¹ As seen in the pilot episode, *Beauty and the Beast* manages to associate Vincent with qualities of sacrifice, caring, and mothering (in his unwavering nurturance of and devotion to Catherine) as well as with other idealized virtues. (He is presented as a scholar and a healer as well as the protector of the people in the tunnels.) In addition, Catherine’s growth as an individual is directly associated with his influence in her life.

With a mother figure who is in fact male, Catherine (and, by extension, the female viewer) is freed of the need to transcend the preoedipal phase. There is no need for her to give up her dependency on the maternal figure in her life since he already provides her with a heterosexual (if not, strictly speaking, human) attachment.

This aspect of the fantasy may be particularly compelling for women, since as Chodorow states, men develop in such a way that they “find it difficult and threatening to meet women’s emotional needs. As a result, they collude in maintaining distance from women.”¹² Yet, as Chodorow adds, all people who have been mothered wish to recreate the intensity of the mother-child relationship. Women, therefore, are likely to find their relationships with men do not satisfy their need for the kind of emotional bond they experienced with their mothers.

Beauty and the Beast, by contrast, presents the possibility of an emotional union with a man who is in fact uniquely capable of the sort of symbiotic relationship which, Chodorow maintains, women wish to recapture. Rather than maintaining his distance from women or seeming reluctant to express emotion, Vincent continually reaffirms the primacy of his union with Catherine. Both characters are given to statements declaring the importance of their love for one another: “She is everything”; “without him, there is nothing.” Such remarks reinforce the frequent scenes in which either Catherine or, more frequently, Vincent disregards her/his personal safety to rescue the other from danger.

However, *Beauty and the Beast* not only recreates the intensity of the mother-child bond for its female viewers, it also dramatizes the trauma of the separation of mother and child. The fear of losing the mother’s love is continually played out in the series. The pilot episode alone contains three scenes in which Vincent and Catherine part, presumably forever. In these protracted farewell scenes, the characters reproduce the anxieties inherent in the female Oedipal conflict. During this stage, Chodorow says, the mother reacts to her daughter’s attempts to break away with ambivalence:

They desire both to keep their daughters close and to push them into adulthood. This ambivalence in turn creates more anxiety in their

daughters and provokes attempts by these daughters to break away.... this spiral, laden as it is with ambivalence, leaves mother and daughter convinced that any separation between them will bring disaster to both.¹³

In keeping with Vincent's maternal role within the series, the parting scenes are more often presented from his point of view than from Catherine's. His inability to live in her world is presented as the major obstacle between them, and it is his misery after the parting that is more frequently chronicled within the series. Yet just as mother and daughter in the Oedipal phase are convinced that tragedy will follow their separation, Vincent and Catherine are inevitably reunited by disaster. Catherine encounters danger, Vincent experiences her fear (proving that, despite their physical separation, their empathic bond cannot be broken) and rushes to her rescue. Thus, *Beauty and the Beast* not only recaptures the poignancy and ambivalence inherent in the breaking of the preoedipal bond, it provides reassurance that such a bond never can be severed completely.

At the same time that he is portrayed as possessing feminine characteristics and providing Catherine with a maternal figure, however, Vincent is also portrayed as exaggeratedly, even savagely, masculine. The manner in which Vincent's masculine characteristics are continually linked to aggression and uncontrollable rage, in fact, to those very traits (other than his physical appearance) which mark him as a "beast," becomes especially pronounced in the program's second season. During this time, Vincent's masculine characteristics operate as signs of excess too severe to be contained within his previous representation as a nurturing figure whose beastly appearance is at odds with his behavior. Instead, the series increasingly implies that Vincent's ferocious outward appearance is an accurate portrait of at least a portion of his character.¹⁴

During the first season, Vincent's flashes of animal rage are not commented on, seemingly justified within the text as necessary for the protection of Catherine and the tunnel dwellers. Within the second season, however, the text begins to deal with Vincent's inability to justify his increasingly frequent outbursts of violence.

Just as the pilot episode of *Beauty and the Beast* highlights the series' themes of nurturance and maternal love, the final episode of the second season focuses on the problem of Vincent's violent nature. Within this episode, Vincent finds himself increasingly unable to control his aggressive tendencies. He suffers from hallucinations in which he sees a darker, even more animalistic double of himself waiting to attack Catherine. His "beastly" rampages become increasingly difficult for him to control, until he finally decides that in order to protect Catherine and the inhabitants of the tunnels he must separate himself from them.

As happens elsewhere in the series, the narrative here links Vincent to the tunnel children. When Vincent announces his decision to leave to the

shocked members of the tunnel community, the children stand in the foreground of the reaction shot, seemingly the ones to whom Vincent delivers his farewell message. The episode suggests that Vincent the maternal figure must protect the children from Vincent the masculine beast.

Thus, when Vincent's maternal characteristics are threatened with annihilation, not just his own security but that of Catherine and the tunnel society are threatened as well. Uncontrolled masculinity becomes a danger to the social order. In retrospect, Vincent's maternal qualities seem to have functioned as a control on his masculine strength and rage. That control, however, is shown to be tenuous at best. Behind the facade of Catherine's gentle, poetry-reading suitor is the very beast that Vincent's appearance indicated at first glance.

Vincent's outward appearance and animalistic nature are not the only signs of the limitations of the maternal bond depicted in *Beauty and the Beast*. When Catherine discovers Vincent's world, she enters a society at least as firmly patriarchal as her own. The community within the tunnels seems to be completely controlled by a character referred to as "Father." Although references are made to councils and group decisions, Father makes the final judgments.¹⁵ Thus, the patriarchal order is maintained even beneath the streets of New York City.

The patriarchal law that controls the tunnel society controls Vincent in both his roles as feminine nurturer and masculine beast. As discussed previously, Vincent the nurturer willingly obeys and serves as teacher of Father's rules. Vincent's animalistic nature is kept in check through his submission to the law of the father. When that side of his nature does appear, it is usually as the protector of the society and the enforcer of its laws. Thus, patriarchal rule is seen as the force which controls both the feminine and masculine sides of Vincent's nature. When that law appears to have insufficient control over the monster within Vincent, he voluntarily banishes himself from the community rather than reveal patriarchy's inability to cope with the beast it has raised.

Thus, while *Beauty and the Beast* can be seen to deal with the issues of bonding and separation that are central to female psychological development, it also places feminine qualities of nurturance and self-in-relation in the context of the need for adequate controls over the destructive and aggressive aspects of masculinity. The fragile balance between feminine and masculine that Vincent represents eventually unravels, suggesting that true integration of male and female qualities is impossible. The realms of male and female behaviors are clearly demarcated. Femininity is linked with nurturance and compassion; masculinity with aggression and action.

By itself, this division would offer nothing new to media scholars. Such a division is one which feminist critics have long maintained exists in film and television texts. What is unique in *Beauty and the Beast* is the site of the

conflict. As feminist critics have also noted, the female body often has been the site of ideological struggle in media.¹⁶ In *Beauty and the Beast*, by contrast, the conflict resolves itself within the male body. Vincent's appearance is androgynous enough to give him leeway to choose among both masculine and feminine characteristics. The exaggerated nature of both Vincent's masculine and feminine sides gives evidence of the socially constructed nature of both genders.

Finally, *Beauty and the Beast* represents patriarchal rule as the most appropriate social order within which both femininity and masculinity may be expressed. Although it is a particularly benevolent patriarchy, one in which men have the freedom to express some feminine qualities, the tunnel society of *Beauty and the Beast* allows its female protagonist no role other than that of daughter. Although she escapes her own father's domination, Catherine enters another patriarchy, acquiring a second Father and a childlike dependency on Vincent. Catherine's inability to express herself as a completely mature, autonomous woman represents the limits of the program's vision of male/female relationships.

Despite its loyal fan following and critical acclaim, *Beauty and the Beast* was never a major economic success. Indeed, following its second season, the series was removed temporarily from the network schedule. Although CBS announced its intention to bring the series back as a midseason replacement, reports of basic format changes soon caused controversy and negative reactions among the series' fans. Fans reacted to indications that the series would undergo extensive revision, downgrading or even possibly eliminating those elements which most strongly appealed to its female audience in an attempt to win more male viewers.

The most disturbing aspect of the revision, for *Beauty and the Beast*'s female fans, centered around the announcement that Linda Hamilton, the actress who played Catherine, was leaving the program.¹⁷ The most persistent rumor stated that the new episodes would begin with the torture of a pregnant Catherine and her death shortly after giving birth (which indeed proved to be the case). *Beauty and the Beast*'s fans were reportedly outraged by the prospect of a such a storyline.¹⁸

Even before Catherine's death became an item of speculation, however, there were indications that the network was revising its position toward the series. Although *Beauty and the Beast* had always combined aspects of the melodrama and action/adventure genres, several factors invited the viewer to read the program as closer in spirit to melodrama than to action. First, the series' placement on CBS's Friday night schedule, preceding *Dallas* and *Falcon Crest*, linked it to melodrama. Second, publicity and promotion for the series linked it to the female-oriented genres of melodrama and romance. Network promos for *Beauty and the Beast* originally featured Vincent and Catherine in romantic settings with voiceovers declaring "Once upon a time is now."¹⁹ Novelizations of series episodes have been

marketed and displayed under the category of romance novel rather than as fantasy or science fiction.

Halfway through the second season, however (at approximately the same time that Vincent's aggression became an important consideration in the text), the advertising for *Beauty and the Beast* underwent a significant change. The promos at that time still featured Vincent and Catherine, but with Catherine in danger and Vincent rushing to her rescue. Scenes showing Vincent crashing through glass doors and windows replaced scenes of Vincent reading poetry on Catherine's balcony. Thus, the promotion for the series began to reflect a desire for a more heterogeneous audience. The network's need to expand its audience, reaching more than just *Beauty and the Beast's* loyal female viewers, may thus have had as much to do with the changes in the series as did Hamilton's departure.

After all, in the melodrama genre in which *Beauty and the Beast* partially falls, the departure of a performer does not necessarily mean the demise of the character being portrayed. Countless times on soap operas new actors have stepped into roles originated by others.²⁰ The decision not to continue the character of Catherine after Hamilton left seems to indicate a pre-existing desire on the part of the network and/or the program's producers to change the direction of the series.

Such a change, however, served only to upset the psychological dynamic that operated within the series. Although earlier episodes played with the notion of Vincent and Catherine separating, the pleasure for the viewer came in the knowledge that the couple's bond never could be broken. That reassurance was so important that, during the first two seasons, it was spoken by Catherine in the credit sequence beginning each episode: "For we have a bond stronger than friendship or love, and although we cannot be together, we will never, ever be apart."

In the third season premiere, however, the bond between Catherine and Vincent is abruptly severed. Following his crisis with the beast side of his character, Vincent discovers that his empathic powers are weakened and that his bond with Catherine has been broken. Thus, when she is kidnapped, his attempts to rescue her prove ineffectual. He begins to sense her presence again six months after the kidnapping, as she goes into labor. However, even at this point the bond is not as infallible as it originally was. Going after the helicopter on which the villain is escaping with his and Catherine's child, Vincent is unaware that Catherine is being poisoned. Thus, the rupture of Vincent and Catherine's empathic bond becomes the catalyst for all the horrors that befall Catherine and for the separation of parent and child.

In this way the narrative seems to confirm the sense of impending disaster which Chodorow maintains mothers and daughters fear in the severing of their own bonds. *Beauty and the Beast*, which won a female audience through its reassurance that the mother-daughter bond could not

be broken, now brings to the forefront the very anxieties it previously allayed. In doing so, the series changes the very nature of the viewing experience for its female audience. The conclusion of the third season premiere, with the murder of the heroine, the final parting of the lovers and the uncertain fate of Catherine's child, offers no possibility of pleasure or reassurance for the female viewer. The series increases its level of action, but only at the expense of those characteristics which made it uniquely appealing to female viewers.

To break the empathic bond by eliminating Catherine's character thus also requires breaking the series' bond with its viewers. In terms of *Beauty and the Beast's* emphasis on issues of nurturance and female development, even the establishment of another bond between Vincent and a new female character could cause displeasure for the regular viewer, who might interpret in the new relationship a contradiction of all that was implied in the previous bond between Vincent and Catherine.²¹ If the bond between Vincent and Catherine was so profound, the viewer may ask, how could she be replaced in Vincent's life so soon after her death? Such an event, combined with the anxiety created by the separation of Vincent and Catherine, could very easily create enough dissonance as to cause the viewer to sever her own relationship with the program.

The series attempts to forestall such a possibility by linking the new female protagonist (police investigator Diana Bennett) to Catherine in several ways. Assigned to investigate Catherine's murder, Diana immerses herself in the details of Catherine's life. She reads Catherine's books, listens to Catherine's favorite music and attempts to revive a dying rosebush she finds on Catherine's balcony. In the final episode it is Diana, rather than Vincent, who uses Catherine's gun to murder Catherine's killer.

Yet, in her scenes with Vincent, Diana's fascination with Catherine only serves to remind the viewer that the bond stronger than friendship or love has been broken. For the viewer to accept Diana's budding relationship with Vincent still requires acknowledgment that Vincent and Catherine's bond was not so profound as it appeared initially. Judging by the ratings,²² that is a premise many viewers were unwilling to accept.

Finally, *Beauty and the Beast* ends with the reaffirmation of the patriarchy and the relegation of both its female protagonists to the background. The final scene depicts a ceremony welcoming Vincent and Catherine's son into the tunnel community. Diana is rendered silent throughout the proceedings, visible only in two reaction shots. Thus bereft of her mission as investigator and avenger of Catherine's death, Diana becomes little more than an extra in the final scene.

As Vincent declares that he has named the child Jacob (Father's real name), Catherine appears, her image superimposed over the upper left portion of the screen. Like Diana, she too has been rendered silent, her

ghostly presence giving the final approval to the establishment of this link between Father, Vincent and her son. Thus, *Beauty and the Beast* ends with the patriarchal order in ascendancy. The series' sentimental invocation of the heroine in its final image serves to further its ideological allegiance.

In its final season, *Beauty and the Beast* adopts an action orientation which does not provide the opportunity for dealing with those issues of female psychology which were previously its central narrative concern. One female protagonist is murdered; the other is ultimately rendered a silent observer of the patriarchal order. Vincent, no longer possessing those empathic skills which made the bond with Catherine possible, becomes in large part a traditional male hero, his major function being to rescue his son from Catherine's killer and thus restore Jacob to his proper place in the patriarchal order. In the process, the series loses more than just one character. It loses those very qualities which most appealed to its female audience.

At a recent *Beauty and the Beast* convention,²³ slogans such as "Remember Catherine" and "Keep the dream alive" were very much in evidence. The fans, while often vociferous in their condemnation of the third season, also maintain their loyalty to the series' original premise and the emphasis on Vincent and Catherine's bond.²⁴ This continued fan participation in *Beauty and the Beast* suggests that the original premise deeply affected its female viewers. The source of the fans' loyalty, I maintain, can be found in the relationship between Vincent and Catherine. That relationship, characterized by the couple's empathic bond, held great meaning for female viewers, which the more action-oriented third season episodes were unable to replace. The continued fan movement, as well as the fan-written materials that accompany it, attest to the fact that Catherine was right when she declared that her bond with Vincent was so strong that "although we cannot be together, we will never, ever be apart."

NOTES

¹Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16 (1975), 6-18; Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade—Theorizing the Female Spectator," *Screen* 23 (1982), 74-88.

²The range of positions on these issues can be observed in the special issue of *Camera Obscura* (May-September 1989) entitled "The Spectatrix," edited by Janet Bergstrom and Mary Ann Doane.

³See, for example, Henry Jenkins III, "'It's Not a Fairy Tale Anymore': Gender, Genre and *Beauty and the Beast*," *Journal of Film and Video* 43 (Spring-Summer 1991), 90-110; Kari Whittenberger-Keith, "Understanding Fandom Rhetorically: The Case of *Beauty and the Beast*," a paper presented at the 1991 Speech Communication Association conference. Articles about *Beauty and the Beast* in the popular press include Monica Collins, "Love Letters Find Beauty in the 'Beast,'" *USA Today* (February 12, 1988), 1D, 2D; David Hofsess, "The Beauty of the Beast," *Detroit News* (January 4, 1989), 1D, 2D; Jeremy Gerard, "The Success of *Beauty and the Beast*," *New York Times* (November 24, 1988), C20.

⁴Stated briefly, Chodorow's work is concerned with explaining female personality development as it occurs in the traditional patriarchal family structure. Chodorow maintains that, while mother-infant

interactions provide the earliest example of self-in-relation for both genders, men and women internalize this relationship in different ways.

Although boys learn to suppress those emotional qualities associated with the mother, girls have more difficulty separating emotionally from their mothers. The experience of being mothered, for girls, is an intense symbiotic union with a parent essentially like themselves and results in an internalized image of the self existing primarily in relation to others.

For women, erotic love for men is likely to remain unsatisfying on some level since men's psychological development makes it difficult for them to provide the emotional symbiosis that women wish to recapture (*The Reproduction of Mothering*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

⁵Janice Raymond, "Female Friendship: Contra Chodorow and Dinnerstein," *Hypatia* 1 (1986), 37-48.

⁶Hester Eisenstein, *Contemporary Feminist Thought* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1983).

⁷Jackie Byars, "Gazes/Voices/Power: Expanding Psychoanalysis for Feminist Film and Television Theory," in *Female Spectators*, ed. Deidre Pribram (London: Verso, 1988), 110-131.

⁸Constance Penley, "Individual Response," *Camera Obscura* (1989), 256-260.

⁹Byars, "Gazes/Voices/Power," 120.

¹⁰Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 84.

¹¹Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*, 83.

¹²Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*, 199.

¹³Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*, 135.

¹⁴An interesting parallel can be drawn between Vincent's appearance and that of the female characters in the "medical discourse" films of the 1940s. In these films the woman's outward disfigurement serves as a "symptom [which] makes visible and material invisible forces to which we would otherwise have no access," Doane, *The Desire to Desire*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 40.

¹⁵The episode "Song of Orpheus," explaining Father's past life, reinforces his suitability for the task of leader: as a brilliant scientist whose career was destroyed during the McCarthy hearings, Father is shown to possess more technical skill and education than the other members of the tunnel community.

¹⁶See, for example, Doane, "Film and the Masquerade."

¹⁷In view of the preceding analysis, it is ironic to note media reports which state that Hamilton left the series in order to remain at home with her own child.

¹⁸Jerry Lazar, "Will Beauty Meet a Beastly End?" *TV Guide* (September 23, 1989), 43-44; Jerry Lazar and Alan Waldman, "Fans Outraged by Beastly Plot," *TV Guide* (October 14, 1989), 44.

¹⁹By contrast, *Beauty and the Beast's* third season time-slot (8 p.m. Wednesday) encouraged a reading of the series as action-oriented, linked no longer to the Friday night melodramas but to the crime dramas *Jake and the Fatman* and *Wiseguy*. In addition, in promos for the series the "Once upon a time is now" tag line was replaced with "It's not a fairy tale any more." Both time slot and promos thus rejected the previous connection of the program with the female-oriented genres of melodrama and romance.

²⁰One of the more recent examples of this in prime-time television can be found on *Dallas*, where the role of Miss Ellie has been portrayed by both Barbara Bel Geddes and Donna Reed.

²¹According to Jenkins' analysis of interviews with a Boston-based group of *Beauty and the Beast* fans, this is precisely the reaction fans had to the new female protagonist Diana Bennett. Jenkins reports that these fans felt cheated of the happy ending *Beauty and the Beast's* fairy tale premise seemed to promise and felt that Diana, while an interesting character, did not belong on this particular series.

While Jenkins' article is generally insightful in its analysis of fan response to changes in the series, he does suggest a contradiction that he does not adequately deal with. He reports that most of the women he interviewed defined themselves as feminists. When asked what the rightful outcome to Vincent and Catherine's story should be, however, most women seemed to suggest that Catherine would eventually give up her career for marriage and life in the tunnels with Vincent. It seems peculiar, to say the least, that women who report that they are feminists would assume that Catherine's "happy life" requires the abandonment of a career to which she is dedicated. I would suggest that this contradiction itself attests to the regressive element of the *Beauty and the Beast* fantasy as well as to the fans' need for a happy ending.

²²The revisions did not make *Beauty and the Beast* a greater economic and ratings success. The two-hour season premiere (the episode in which Catherine dies) was 37th in the ratings. The first episode without Catherine, broadcast the very next night, dropped to 54th. Approximately one month after the episode in which Catherine died was broadcast, CBS cancelled *Beauty and the Beast*.

²³The South of Oz convention, held in June 1991 in Orlando, Florida.

²⁴Another indication of this can be seen in the number of fan-written novellas which attempt to rewrite the third season, finding alternatives to Catherine's death.